

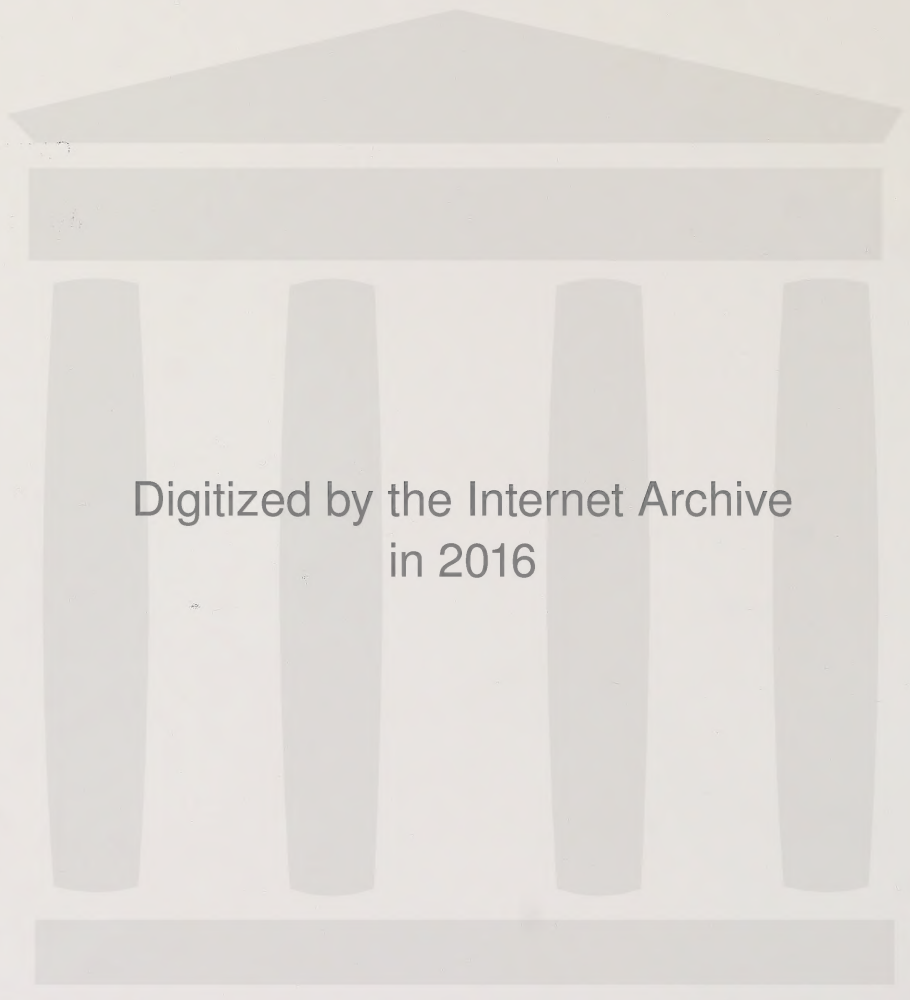
PASSES and PEAKS:

A Guide to Geographical
Features in the Crowsnest Pass



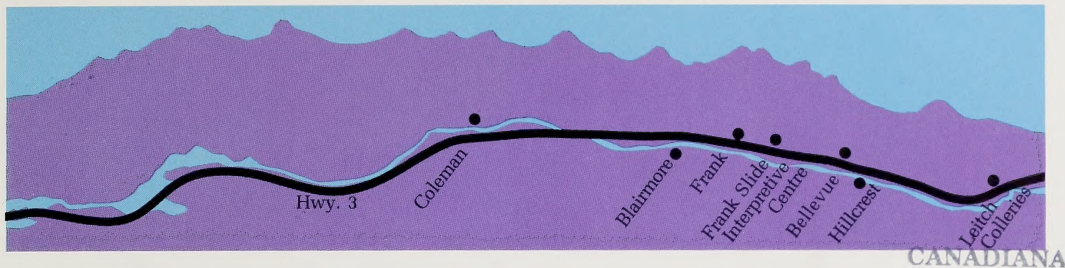
Alberta

CULTURE AND MULTICULTURALISM



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Toponymic Research in Alberta

Toponymic research is primarily concerned with the origin and meaning of place names. In Alberta, the Geographical Names Programme of the Historic Sites Service, a branch of Alberta Culture & Multiculturalism, researches and provides information about proposed names, name changes and names previously established. It also answers public enquiries regarding specific names, and co-ordinates activities with the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names in Ottawa.

Place names often reflect the fascinating history of a region and can offer interesting insight into the groups of people or individuals that have had an impact in an area. These could include, for example, Indian inhabitants, explorers, fur traders, trappers, outfitters, mountain climbers and early settlers.

Place Names in the Crowsnest Pass

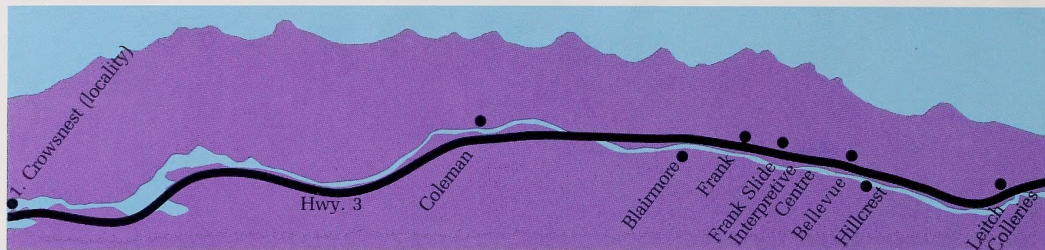
The Crowsnest Pass is a 32-kilometre historic corridor located approximately 160 kilometres by road west of Lethbridge and 242 kilometres south-west of Calgary. It is the most southerly of the three passes through the Canadian Rockies used by railways. Primary access to the Pass is provided along Highway #3, which bypasses most of the communities along the older routes.

The Crowsnest Pass has a rich and important history. It was noted by the fur trader and surveyor, Peter Fidler, in 1792, while he camped at The Gap on the Oldman River, and later by the explorer Captain Thomas Blakiston,

who crossed the entrance to the Pass near Lundbreck in 1858. But Michael Phillipps, a retired Hudson's Bay Company factor, is credited with being the first white man to use the Crowsnest Pass route through the Rockies.

In 1873, Phillipps travelled from the Lee Ranch to Frank, where he discovered the now-famous sulphur springs upon which a hotel was built. (The hotel is no longer standing.) Phillipps recalled, "I saw at once the advantage of a pass through the great rocky range without a mountain to go over and I determined to work for a trail." Phillipps was soon followed by a few ranchers, but not until the Canadian Pacific Railway constructed a major line through the Pass in the 1890s did extensive development take place. The discovery of coal fostered the growth of mining towns that produced coal and coke. Indeed, the Pass was once one of the greatest centres in Canada for the production of coke and steam coal. In 1979, the former coal mining communities were consolidated as the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass, incorporating the former localities of Bellevue, Hillcrest, Blairmore, Frank, Coleman, and the Old Improvement District #5.

The original Crowsnest Trail, the Tent Mountain/Coal Creek route, was first shown on geologist George Dawson's map in 1882. Dawson traversed the Pass in 1882 and 1883 while exploring the geology of the region. In 1888, Colonel Sam Steele led the North West Mounted Police "B Division" march out to the Kootenay area by this route. Around 1908, the British Columbia government built a wagon road



through Tent Mountain Pass to the Corbin Mining Camp and on to the Flathead Range. It was the only road to Corbin, and the local residents often used it to visit the communities on the eastern slopes.

Origin of the Name “Crowsnest”

There are currently two competing accounts for the origin of the name Crowsnest. The first, which appeared in *MacLean's Magazine* in 1928, is that some time around 1852, a party of Blackfoot Indians managed to cut off a group of raiding Crow Indians who were trying to escape westward through the Pass.

The Crow were cornered and slaughtered at the base of a mountain, which was named Crow's Nest in memory of the occasion. Since Amerindian groups rarely left written records, this version of the origin of the name is difficult to substantiate in documented form.

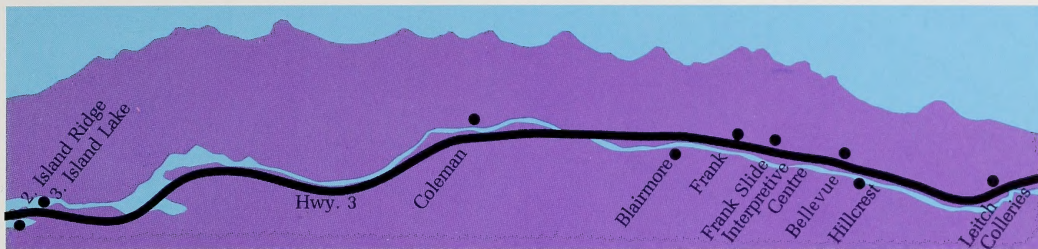
The other possibility, and the one for which documentary evidence can be more readily supplied, pertains to the nesting of the crows or ravens near the base of the peak known as Crowsnest Mountain. The Palliser Expedition preliminary report refers to it as *Lodge des Corbeaux*. Translated literally it means 'The nest of the crow or raven'. The first mention of the name in historic documents was made by Captain Blakiston of the Palliser Expedition, who noted under the date of December 15, 1858, "I have not mentioned the existence of two other passes across this portion of the mountains called the Crow-nest and Flathead Passes ... the Crow-nest pass of which I have marked the

general direction on the plan follows up the Crow-nest River ... by report of the natives it is a very bad road and seldom used". Blakiston did not explain why the Indians considered this to be such a bad road. A narrative list of toponymic features that are visible and/or accessible from the Crowsnest Pass Highway has been compiled for your reference while driving through this region. Each is numbered and its location is shown on the accompanying map. As well, a photograph of each feature is included to enable you to identify it. Each of the photographs here appear as you will see it from the highway.

Toponymic Features



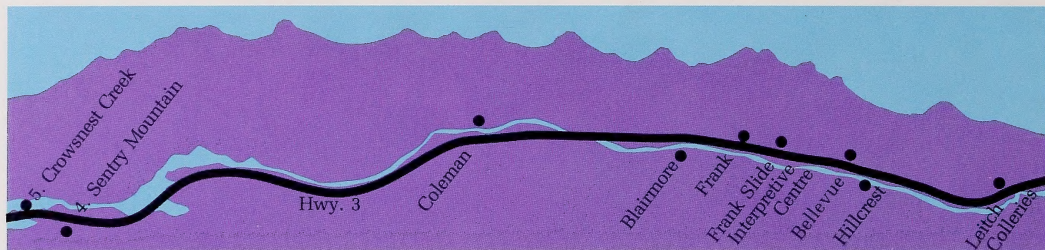
1) Crowsnest: former locality – named after the crows or ravens which were alleged to nest near the base of the mountain.



2) Island Ridge: ridge – see Island Lake (#3).



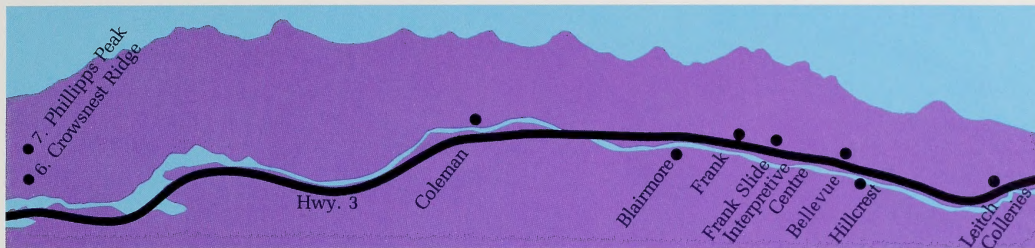
3) Island Lake: lake – name most probably descriptive and refers to the strip of land that juts out into the water. It is possible that at one time this piece of land was totally surrounded by water.



4) Sentry Mountain: mountain – 2435 metres (7988'); so named for its conspicuous position. The origin is most probably descriptive. In the 1950s, the name was changed from Sentinel Mountain to Sentry Mountain in order to avoid confusion with another mountain of the same name.



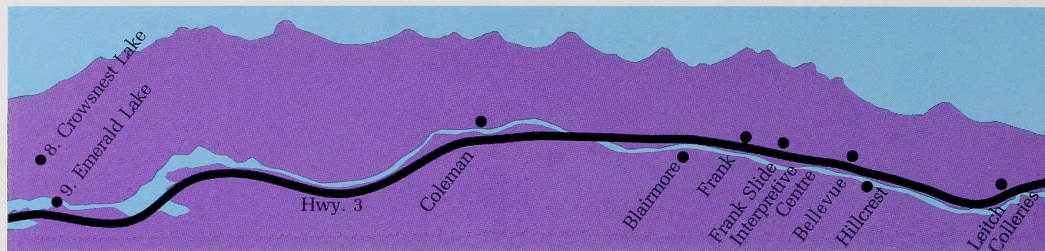
5) Crowsnest Creek: Creek – see Crowsnest (locality – #1).



6) Crowsnest Ridge: ridge – see Crowsnest (locality – #1).



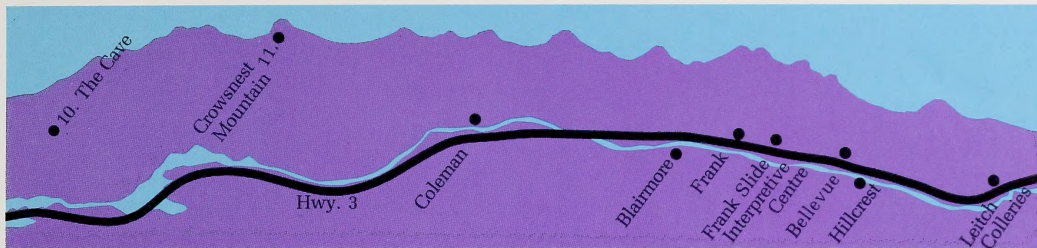
7) Phillipps Peak: peak – 2499m (8200'): named in 1960 after Michael Phillipps, a Hudson's Bay Company factor in charge of a post at the mouth of the Wild Horse River in British Columbia circa 1864: see also Phillipps Pass.



8) Crowsnest Lake: lake – see Crowsnest (locality – #1).



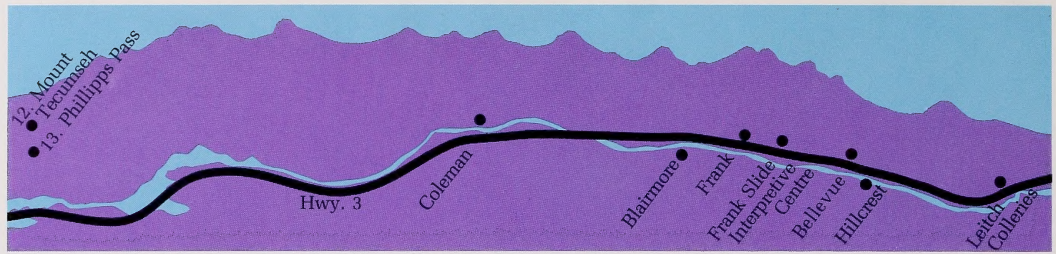
9) Emerald Lake: lake – name most probably descriptive of the colour of the lake when the sun shines on it. Even though the name was not officially adopted until 1977, residents of the area agree that the name has been in use for 60 years or more.



10) The Cave: cave - name is probably descriptive of the spring which enters the north side of Crowsnest Lake. The spring is believed to be related to the Lewis Thrust Fault or to one of its subsidiary faults. A spring may appear where groundwater travels through a fault to the surface. The middle fork on Crowsnest Lake has its source in the mysterious caves above where the river widens and its unknown depths form a chain of beautiful lakes.



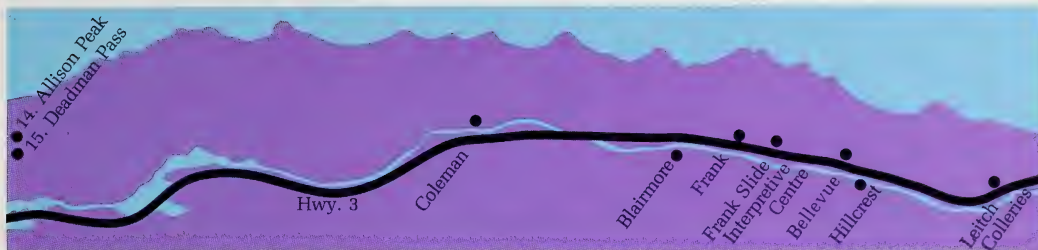
11) Crowsnest Mountain: mountain - 2774 metres (9100'): see Crowsnest (locality - #1).



12) Mount Tecumseh: mountain – 2549 metres (8364'): named in honour of Tecumseh (shooting star), a Shawnee Indian Chief (1768-1813). Born in the United States, he became a champion of the Indians against the steady encroachment of white settlement on Indian lands. As a result of an American victory at Tippecanoe, Indiana, he and many of his followers went over to the British in Canada. In the War of 1812 he was made a brigadier general and led his Indians against the Americans. He was killed at the Battle of Moraviantown in Upper Canada.



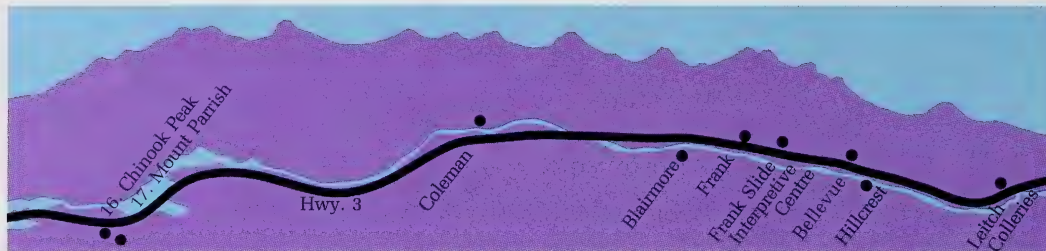
13) Philipps Pass: pass – named in 1960 after Michael Philipps, retired Hudson's Bay Company factor, who used this mountain pass extensively in his travels through Alberta and British Columbia: see also Philipps Peak (#7).



14) Allison Peak: peak – 2463 metres (8671); named after Douglas Allison, a member of the Royal North West Mounted Police who settled on the west bank of the creek at the base of the mountain.



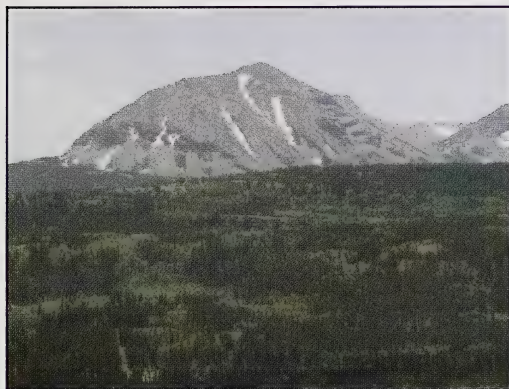
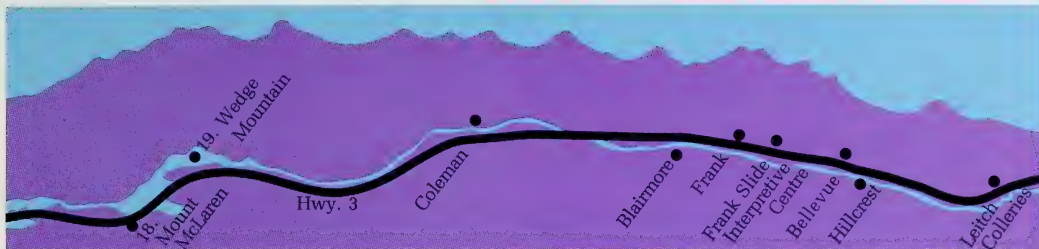
15) Deadman Pass: pass – according to local legend, a certain “Fingerprint” Charlie claimed that a group of Indians who were chased by forty United States Cavalry enticed them into this pass, where some of the Indians sneaked off the trail and hid behind huge trees. At the far (western) end the cavalry realized, too late, that the Indians were waiting to ambush them. At the eastern end, the trail was blocked by huge timbers, and it was here that the Americans were massacred when they attempted to double back.



16) Chinook Peak: peak – 2591 metres (8500’): name originates with the peculiar phenomenon which occurs, according to local residents, prior to a chinook. It appears that clouds gather winds on the eastern side of the slope before passing to the western side, where they lose much of their force.



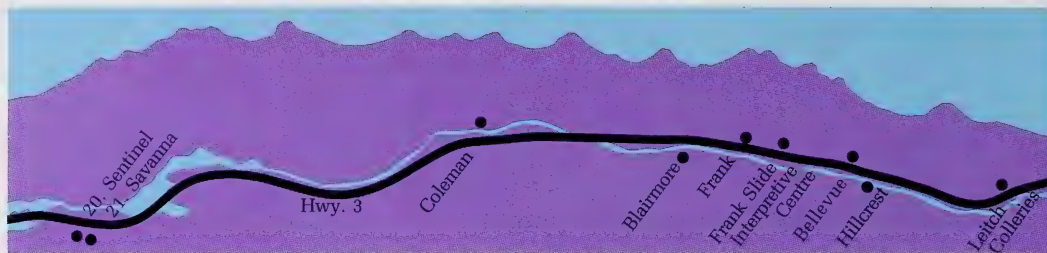
17) Mount Parrish: mountain – 2530 metres (8300’): named after Sherman Parrish, a pioneer settler in the district, who resided a few miles north of the mountain in the late nineteenth century.



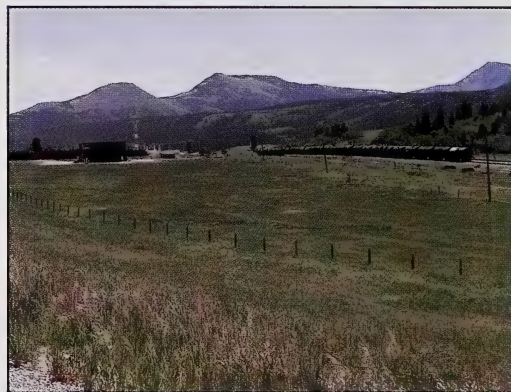
18) Mount McLaren: mountain – 2286 metres (7500'); named after Senator Peter McLaren (1833-1919), a pioneer logging operator in the district.



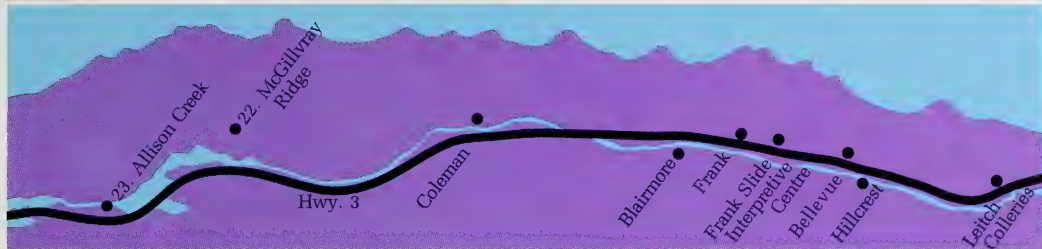
19) Wedge Mountain: mountain – 1890 metres (6200'); name is most probably descriptive of this mountain, which closely resembles a wedge.



20) Sentinel: former locality – name derives from Mount Sentry located on the south shore of Crowsnest Lake. The area known as Sentinel was originally called Sentry Siding. Sentinel was established in 1909 in order that clay could be loaded into railway cars and shipped to Medicine Hat to be used to manufacture sewer pipe. The name Sentry was later changed to Sentinel, and a flag station erected east of the railway crossing on Highway #3.



21) Savanna: former locality – name taken from a creek of the same name, the source of natural gas for the Jefferson Lake Gas Plant.



22) McGillivray Ridge: ridge – named by William Henry around 1873 after William McGillivray (1764-1825), who became a partner in the North West Company in 1790 and its chief director in 1804. He was a member of the House of Assembly of Lower Canada in 1808 and 1809 for Montreal West, and of the Legislative Council of Lower Canada from 1814 to 1825.

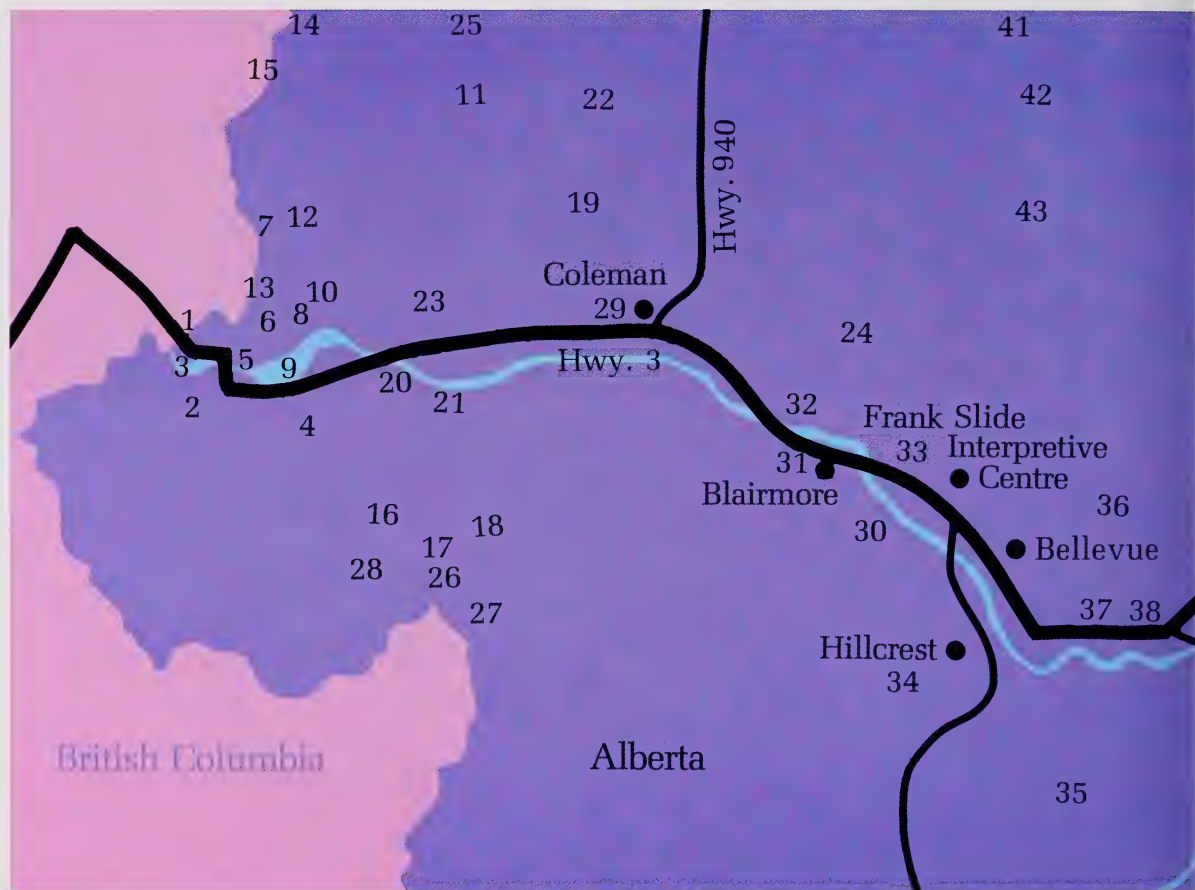


23) Allison Creek: creek – named after Douglas Allison: see Allison Peak (#14).

Map of Tour Area

(Alberta-British Columbia Boundary to Pincher Creek, Highway 3)

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Crowsnest (locality) | 8. Crowsnest Lake | 15. Deadman Pass | 22. McGillvray Ridge |
| 2. Island Ridge | 9. Emerald Lake | 16. Chinook Peak | 23. Allison Creek |
| 3. Island Lake | 10. The Cave | 17. Mount Parrish | 24. Bluff Mountain |
| 4. Sentry Mountain | 11. Crowsnest Mountain | 18. Mount McLaren | 25. Seven Sisters Mountain |
| 5. Crowsnest Creek | 12. Mount Tecumseh | 19. Wedge Mountain | 26. Andy Good Peak |
| 6. Crowsnest Ridge | 13. Philipps Pass | 20. Sentinel | 27. Mount Coulthard |
| 7. Philipps Peak | 14. Allison Peak | 21. Savanna | 28. Flathead Range |

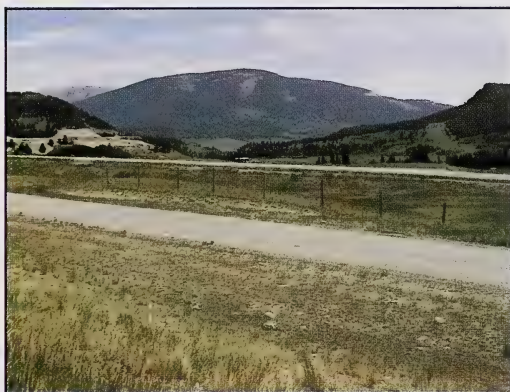
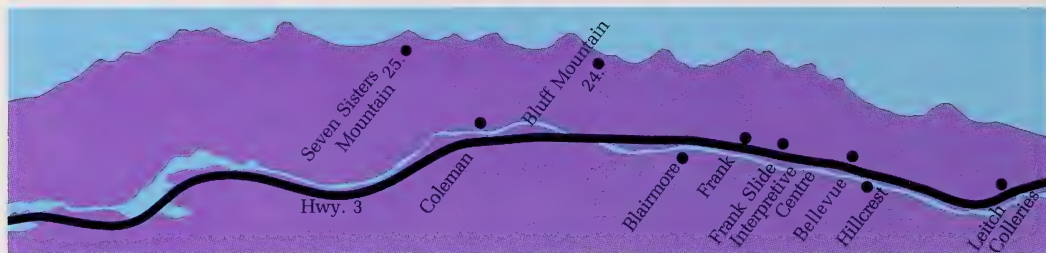


29. Coleman
30. Turtle Mountain
31. Blairmore
32. Lyons Creek
33. Frank
34. Hillcrest Mountain
35. Byron Hill

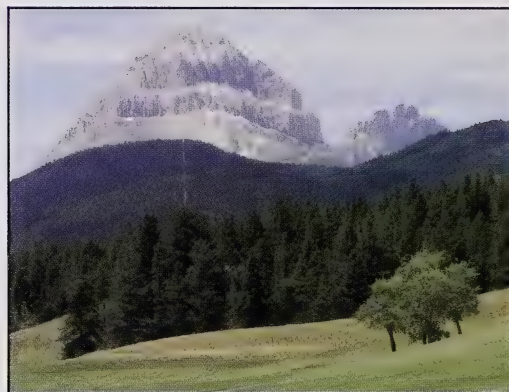
36. Tallon Peak
37. Police Flats
38. Burmis
39. Chapel Rock
40. Lundbreck
41. Centre Peak
42. Caudran Peak

43. Livingstone Range
44. Cowley
45. Massacre Butte
46. Pincher Creek

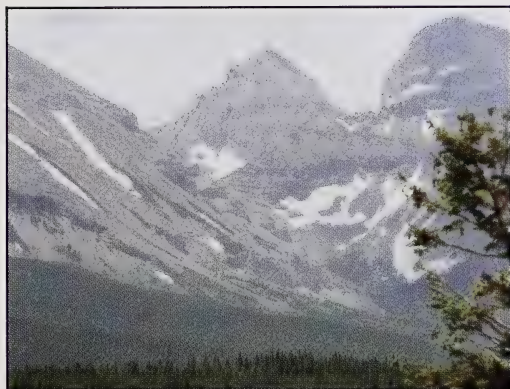




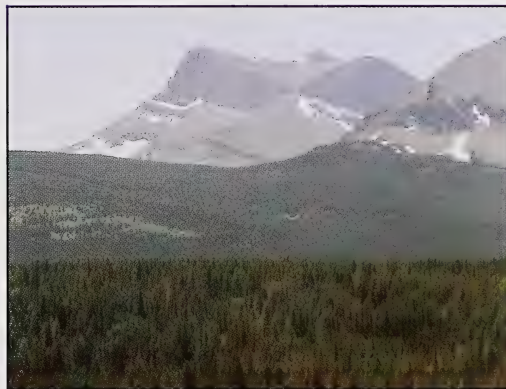
24) Bluff Mountain: mountain – 2145 metres (7039'); named around 1915; name is probably descriptive of this feature, which seems to rise distinctively above the surrounding terrain.



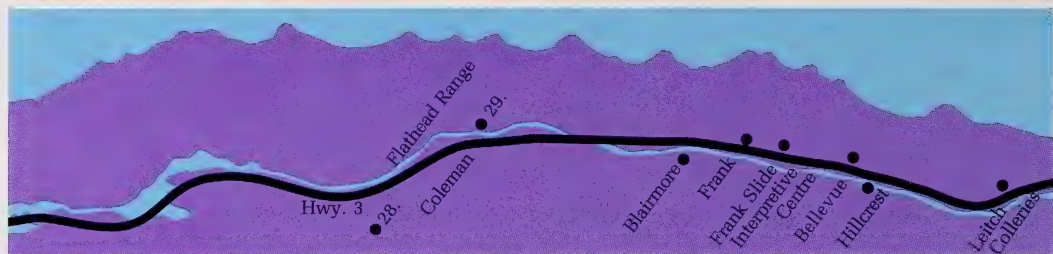
25) Seven Sisters Mountain: mountain – 2591 metres (8500'); name is descriptive of this feature's seven jagged peaks. While the name was not officially adopted until 1978, it has been in use for over 50 years.



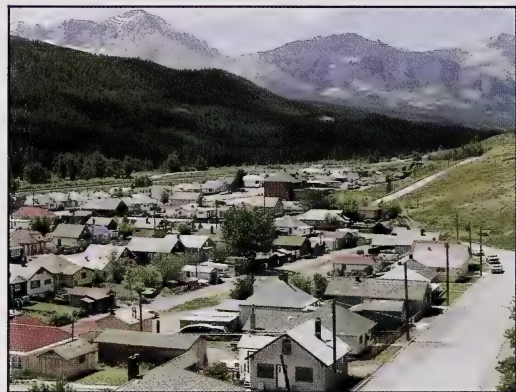
26) Andy Good Peak: peak – 2621 metres (8600'): named after Andrew Good, proprietor of the Crows Nest Hotel, which straddled the Alberta-British Columbia border. The boundary survey was made along a small creek, but Andy Good knew the location of the watershed that controlled its movement. Good boasted that he could control the watershed, so that any time there was a change in liquor-hour legislation he could serve either in Alberta or in British Columbia. Since Good was a keen prospector, the hotel was a point of supply for other prospectors. One Baptiste La More, a hunter of French descent, supplied game for meals at the hotel. This ensured repeated visits by his customers, who not only spread word of the meals, but also made the display of outstanding game heads in the bar and lobby, known across the continent.



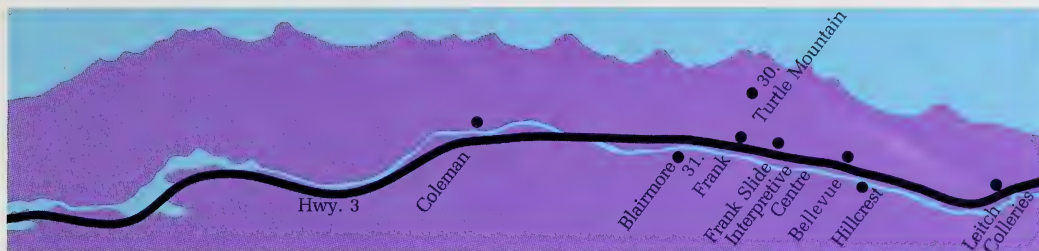
27) Mount Coulthard: mountain – 2642 metres (8668'): named after R.W. Coulthard, at one time a prominent mining engineer in Calgary.



28) Flathead Range: range – named after the Flathead Indians of western Montana.



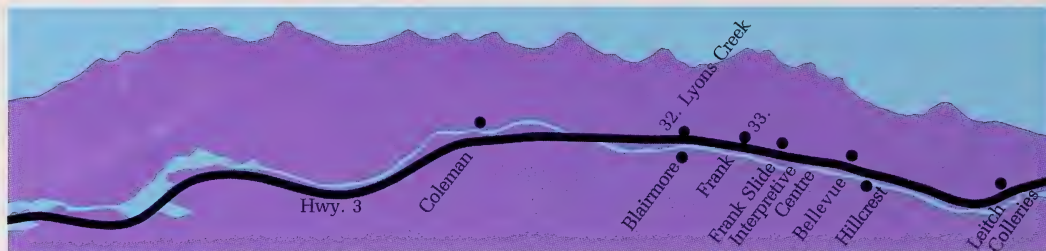
29) Coleman: former locality – named in 1904 by A.C. Flumerfelt, President of the International Coal and Coke Company, after his youngest daughter, Florence Coleman Flumerfelt. The town came into being as a result of the discovery of large coal deposits and the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad line from Lethbridge to Kootenay Lake through the Crowsnest Pass.



30) Turtle Mountain: mountain – 2204 metres (7230'): named in the 1880s for its resemblance to a turtle by the pioneer Louis O. Garnett, on a trip from Pincher Creek. It was the scene of the Frank Slide of 1903, when some 90 million tons of rock slid down the mountain, burying part of the mining town of Frank and taking seventy lives.



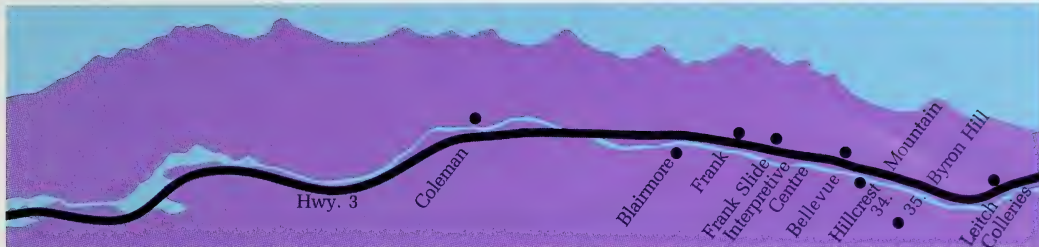
31) Blairmore: former locality – named in 1898 after the Minister of Railways in the Laurier government, A.G. Blair (1844-1907). It is said that when the name Blair was first suggested it was considered too short, so the “more” was added.



32) Lyons Creek: creek – named after Harold E. Lyon, and early mayor of Blairmore following incorporation in 1911. One of the first settlers in the Pass, he served successive terms as a telegrapher, postmaster and Magistrate.



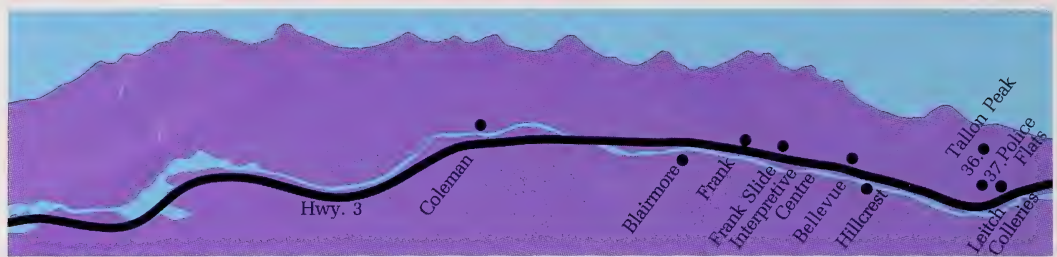
33) Frank: former locality – named after the Honourable H.L. Frank of Butte, Montana, who was one of the founders of the Canadian American Company, the first coal mining company in the area.



34) Hillcrest Mountain: mountain – 2164 metres (7101’): named after Charles P. Hill, the Managing Director of the Hillcrest Coal and Coke Company. Hillcrest Mines was the scene of one of the worst mining disasters in Canada when, on June 19, 1914, an explosion took 189 lives.



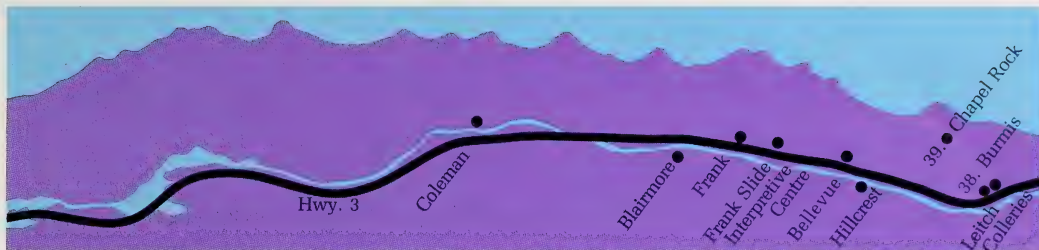
35) Byron Hill: hill – located on the Crowsnest River; named after a small mining townsite owned by the Byron Creek Collieries.



36) Tallon Peak: peak – 1829 metres (6000’): named after L. Tallon, an assistant surveyor during the major surveys the Canadian government made of the Rockies in 1888 and again in 1892.



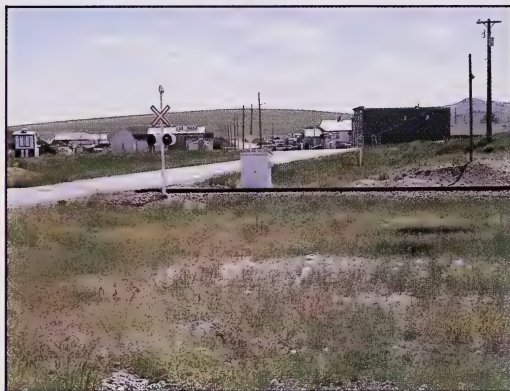
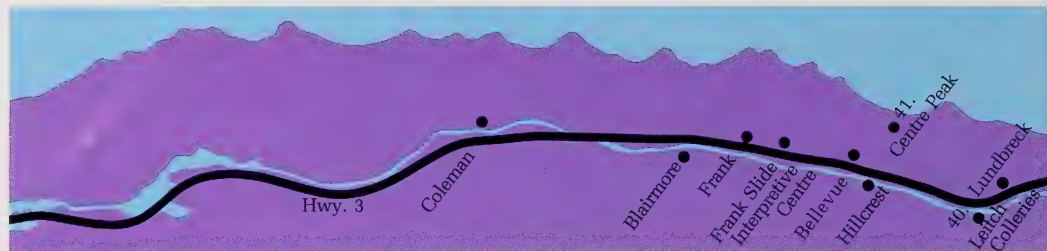
37) Police Flats: flat – the first site of a North West Mounted Police outpost in the Crowsnest Pass. The post was established in the 1870s to deal with the problem of cattle rustling. Cattle smugglers were said to have kept their stolen livestock in the Pass before driving the animals into the United States to be sold.



38) Burmis: former locality – named after two local prospecting residents, Burmis is a compounded form of their names, Burns and Kemmis.



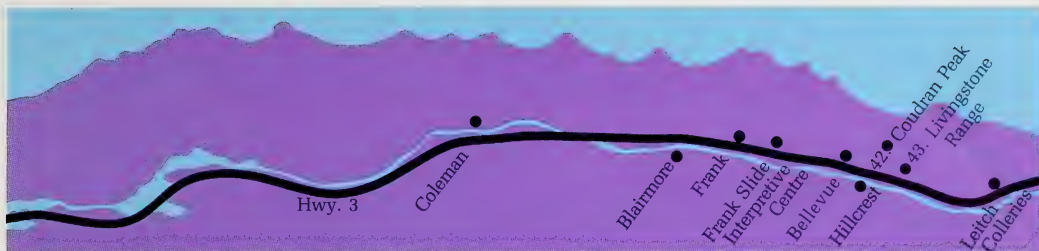
39) Chapel Rock: butte – the exact origin of this name is unknown but it is most probably descriptive. This locality once had a school and a post office.



40) Lundbreck: locality – named after the Breckenridge and Lund Coal Company, which operated collieries and sawmills in the area. The name is a compound form of Lund and Breckenridge.



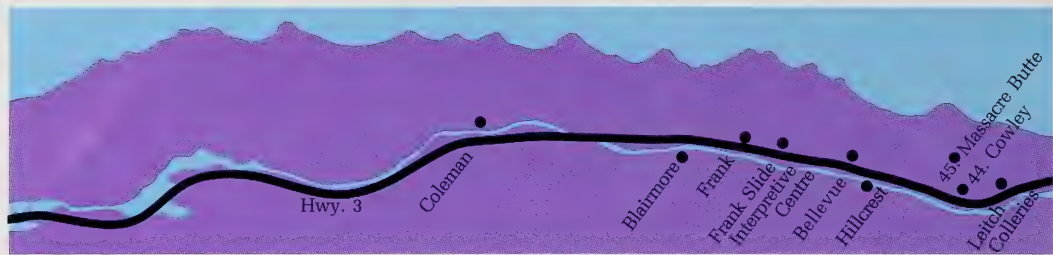
41) Centre Peak: peak – 2547 metres (8355'); name is most probably descriptive. This peak on the British Columbia – Alberta border in the Livingstone Range lies between the heads of two valleys.



42) Coudron Peak: peak – 2547 metres (8355'); name is most probably descriptive of the summit, which is said to resemble a cooking cauldron (translated from the French *chaudron*).



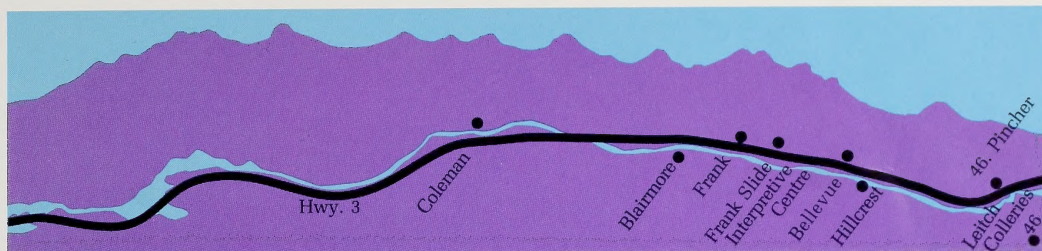
43) Livingstone Range: range – named in 1858 after David Livingstone (1813-1873), a noted explorer and missionary in Africa, by Captain Blakiston of the Palliser Expedition sponsored by the British government to explore British North America between 1857 and 1861.



44) Cowley: locality – named by one of the first ranchers in the area, F.W. Godsall, who while watching his cattle wandering across the prairie, was reminded of Thomas Gray's poem, "Elegy Written In A Country Churchyard" which contains the line, "lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea".



45) Massacre Butte: butte – named for an incident said to have occurred in 1867, in which an immigrant group of 12 men, women and children were massacred by a war party of Blood Indians. The party, led by Blood warrior Medicine Calf, struck while the group was camped here for the night. According to the story, the victims were originally part of Captain James L. Fisk's expedition from Minnesota to Helen, Montana, and had left the main party to travel northward for reasons that have not been explained. The Fisk journey took place in the summer of 1866.



46) Pincher Creek: locality – referred to by this name in Canadian surveyor's reports dated 1880, and in Dawson's maps as "Little Highwood River". Prospectors, miners, freetraders and explorers invaded the district in the early 1860s, and among them was a party of prospectors from Montana. Apparently, they camped one night by this creek and lost some of their most valuable implements – 2 pairs of pincers. In 1875, Colonel James Macleod sent a detachment of his men into the foothills to establish a post there, and on arriving at the same creek where the prospectors had camped years before, the men found the lost pincers, by now rusted. From this incident the stream derived its name, which in time became Pincher Creek.

Further information on these or other place names within Alberta can be obtained by writing to:

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